upgraded as below:

(a) Department of Telecom Services (DTS) is setting up national internet backbone in the country.

(b) Internet Service Providers are allowed to set up last mile linkages freely by fibre optic or by radio communication.

(c) The Internet access is also allowed through authorized cable TV.

The tariff for internet access has been recently reduced. DTS have recently offered 20% concession on rental for leased lines taken and used for internet applications. Students are being given one time concession on internet accounts by DTS. Access to internet on local call basis from the nearest internet node has been provided throughout the country except in Andaman and Nicobar Island and Leh (J and K). The existing departmental Public Call Operators (PCO) and Subscriber Trunk Dailing (STD) booths are proposed to be upgraded to public tele-info/cyber centres. These centres will provide multi-utility services such as internet, e-mail access and internet libraries.

To provide the legal framework for transaction on Internet and e-commerce, Information Technology Biil, 1999 was introduced in the last session of the Parliament. Such a legal framework will facilitate and give a fillip to the e-commerce activities in the country.

Cure of Orissa Cyclone Victims

*215. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the plans Government propose to initiate to attend the serious problems due to recent super cyclone in Orissa which has resulted in large number of orphans, similarly large number of people suffered mental and psychological trauma and thus resulted in neurological disorder; and

(b) whether Government have earmarked any provision in the budget in this regard; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA): (a) The Government of Orissa has taken some initiatives for the orphaned children by providing shelter, orphanages, medicine, etc. as also for women who have been widowed. The Department of Women and Child Development has sanctioned 31 Short Stay Homes for women and children. The Team deputed by them to Orissa suggested ensuring proper nutrition and health cover for

women and children on a sustained basis in the coming months and special attention for orphaned children, widows and destitute women. The Team deputed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to the cyclone affected areas has recommended constitution of an Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Health Secretary Orissa for monitoring, among other things, the mental health needs of the affected pupulation and funding as well as strengthening of mental health infrastructure in the State.

(b) Assistance of Rs. 42.50 crore from the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and ad-hoc assistance of Rs. 500.00 crore from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) has been released to Orissa for undertaking immediate relief measures in the wake of natural calamities including the Super cyclone. No separate budget provision is made.

Declaration by the Forum in Davos regarding budget

*216. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the declaration by the Forum in Davos regarding the content and direction of the forthcoming budget; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) There was no declaration issued by the Forum in Davos.

(b) Does not arise.

Grants for Poverty alleviation Programmes

*217. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of people identified as living below poverty line as on December 1999, State-wise;

(b) what steps are being taken to improve the lots of these people;

(c) what is the quantum of total grants for poverty alleviation programme; and

(d) how much has been granted/spent as on December, 1999 to improve the condition of these people, State-wise?